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AMERICAN EMPRESS

Credit for the Empire's Troubled Royalty

new mixed-media paintings
by Karen Miranda Augustine

September 3rd – 27th, 2009

North York Central Library
5120 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
(416) 395-5535



Opening Reception: Thursday, September 3rd, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

*A new mother is suddenly confronted with her partner's violent suicide.
A young woman finds herself in the midst of an abusive relationship.
A teenager allows herself to become manipulated by her middle-aged lover.*

It is a lazy and clichéd reduction to claim that we are all blindly consumed with the culture of celebrity. If anything, the troubles that befall public figures are simply magnified mirrors of the tragedies, struggles and personal demons understood by the common person. The women in this series have fallen; some have made comebacks in especially challenging situations, which have inspired and reminded many that one's true nature is never really lost.

We are all tainted.... From Tonya Harding to Lauryn Hill, Margaret Cho to Amy Fisher, **AMERICAN EMPRESS** is a solo exhibition that explores adversity as a rite of passage. Presented as a series of 14 mixed-media paintings, contemporary pop culture figures are transformed into a series of credit card portraits that speak to everyday concerns: the transcendence of loss, social stigma, mental illness, addiction and personal crisis.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Visual artist, writer and videomaker, Karen Miranda Augustine creates ritualistic pop art that is heavily influenced by African belief systems, outsider expressionism and counterculture. With the physicality of low-relief assemblage, her mixed-media paintings are a complex of the contemporary and the arcane. They address the gendered experience in terms of earthly conditions converging with the metaphysical. Her underlying theme dwells on how one passes through affliction to a place of self-possession.

Further information:

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